



PCAC

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**Statement of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA
to the MTA Board on MTA Funding
MTA Headquarters, 2 Broadway, 20th Floor, New York, NY**

September 26, 2018

Good morning, I'm Bill Henderson, the PCAC's Executive Director, and I'm here to speak about ensuring that the MTA has adequate funding to maintain its system and provide this region with the transportation service that is so critical to its success. In the past four decades, and particularly in the past decade, our organization has spent a lot of time considering what the MTA system needs to excel and how to secure the resources needed to reach this objective. As we confront yet another point in time where system needs demand examination of the finances supporting the MTA, we believe that the path we've advocated practically since the PCAC's birth – funding that is stable, reliable, and able to adjust to inflation and the changing needs of the system – is the appropriate solution today

Instead, the financial choices made by the MTA and by others have too often involved one-shot, band-aid solutions that have allowed us to lurch from present difficulties to the next crisis several years down the road. The system that exists today is in large part the product of this lack of stable funding. This has led us to where we are today, with an MTA system that is heavily burdened, performing below reasonable standards, and weighed down by years of deferred repair and modernization.

When I first arrived at PCAC a little over fourteen years ago one of the first things I worked on was the 2005 Bond Act, which rewarded its backers with \$1.45 billion to invest in the MTA. We were happy to see the Act approved by voters, but it didn't solve the MTA's resource issues. Neither did a real estate boom, a modest slice of sales taxes, massive borrowing, or the payroll mobility tax. Instead of facing up to what was necessary, we constrained needs assessments and waited for the "someday" where the system could catch up. The bottom line is the system needs more resources, both in terms of financing and priority in the public realm. Should

we execute improvements more smartly and efficiently – absolutely, but we need to make necessary commitments now.

Advocates, business and civic leaders, and everyday riders recognize the needs of the system and are talking about how to meet them. The members of this Board must also deliver this message. This may sometimes involve saying “with all due respect, that funding level won’t cut it in the long run” to our elected leaders, including the people who named you to this Board. It won’t be easy, but please do the right thing and the PCAC, its Councils, and our members will be there to back you up.

By the way, we know this process could take a while, and that’s why it’s important to start now. I mentioned the Bond Act was one of my first projects, but New Fare Payment was the absolute first thing I worked on.

In closing I wish you good luck and attentive elected officials.